

The political metaphor – from expressive values to persuasive virtues

Mihaela Mocanu

Interdisciplinary Research Department – Socio-Humanities Field
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania

E-mail address: mocanu.mihaela@uaic.ro

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ABSTRACT. A particular form of interference, with indirectly transferred effects and communicative values, the political metaphor essentially mirrors the issuer's effort towards evading and mystifying the political reality. Intensively used in the contemporary political discourse, the political metaphor loses the virtues of the poetical metaphor becoming rather laborious and vulgar, in the etymological sense of the term. The political discourse mainly exploits the quality of the metaphor to operate transfers from the complex to the simple, from the abstract to the concrete, conferring a strong subjective dimension to political communication. As well as this, we emphasize the polemic character of metaphorical constructions in the contemporary political discourse and their role in discrediting political adversaries. Defining the political metaphor in terms of interaction and transaction between contexts brings forward the semantic potential of metaphoric expressions and consequently, their impact upon the reception level. This study proposes a presentation of the main persuasive virtues that the metaphor acquires within political communication, by analysing the addresses held in the plenum of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies in May-June 2015.

1. INTRODUCTION

The expression of power hierarchies on the political stage is achieved by the use of extremely different languages: image, music, props, uniforms, architecture, signs, and so forth. Nearly all products of human activity can be valued by means of political action. Verbal language is, however, dominant, due to both the impact it has upon the audience and the multitude of its specific forms of manifestation. In this respect, M. Edelman emphasizes the fact that “language is an integral facet of the political stage: it is not merely an instrument used for describing the events, but it is in itself a part of the events, enhancing their meaning and helping in defining the political parts that politician and masses believe they play.”¹

Aiming at managing the life of a community, politics makes use of signs in order to draw attention upon its representations and in order to confer coherence to the social dimension. Besides being interested in knowing everything that is happening, the politician is interested in the forms of representation of the political referential. S/he builds his/her discourse depending on the ideology s/he professes and the effects s/he wishes to obtain from the addressees. Being the equivalent of a battle for conquering the signs of power, political action actually aims at achieving the right/access to the spoken word, and ultimately at gaining the privilege to impose its own meanings. Nowadays, politics turns discourse into one of its most favourite weapons, because “within the politicized society we live in, political transactions necessarily mean force, yet they are achieved without explicitly making use of force – in the same way in which financial transactions are done without the actual use of gold”².

Political language is not a mere ornament or supra-structure, but it represents a constitutive element of political action, since political representations, by means of which individuals and groups are defined, become increasingly consistent and visible through discursive manifestations. Numerous political acts are, by their very own nature, acts of discourse (resignations offer an

¹ M. Edelman, *Politica și utilizarea simbolurilor*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1999, p. 3.

² Burgelin Olivier, *La naissance du pouvoir étudiant*, in „Communications”, nr. 21, 1968, p. 33.

example in this respect), while others base their achievement on the spoken word. The relationship between political function and language raises at least two questions: *Which are the effects of political function upon the language?* and *Which are the mechanisms that language triggers while achieving its political function?* If the first question brings forward the pragmatic dimension of communication, the second one focuses on aspects related to syntax and semantics. While the political language semantics aims at researching keywords, slogans and doctrines from the point of view of their meaning, syntax is interested in describing the logical and grammatical relationships governing the discursive manifestations in the political sphere. This is why an analysis of the relationships between language and power should focus on both analysing the way politicians make use of language in order to access power and describing the discursive mechanisms that justify the access / position of the politician to/within the power system.

Being mostly a territory of discursiveness, as from this perspective “discourse – (...) – is not only meant to translate battles and domination systems, but it is the very ground and reason of the battle: it is the power fought for”³, politics resorts to language in order to obtain the support and adhesion of the public opinion. Political power depends on public opinion, being in a constant need for discursive legitimization in front of the electorate. On the political stage, battles are lost and won by means of discourse, the word presents and represents at the same time, serves and betrays the one using it. The multiplication of the means of communication as well as the excessive verbalization of each event, phenomena specific to “the transparent society”⁴ we live in, forces politicians to dissimulate their political actions through discourse and render their verbal manifestations more and more efficient, constantly referring to the contextual parameters of the communication situation. The proliferation of information choices has led to the dissolution of a unique perspective upon reality, and consequently plurality has replaced referential uniqueness: there is no unique reality, but there exist multiple images of that reality, various ways to interpret the same events, with specific effects upon their reception.

In a world in which everything is word and is built through words, political language is meant to symbolically reflect the power balance between the actors, the transmitters’ hierarchies, ideological beliefs and conflicts, besides communicating certain political attitudes. From this perspective, Pierre Bourdieu claims that politics can be reduced to a complex of symbolic relationships, reflected by language⁵. This is to say, that the word implies a certain political authority and certain rights, while, on the other hand, the exercise of power involves a sense of dominance upon the word. The double hypostasis of political language – tool of expression and finality, is also underlined by Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Discourse*: “Discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized.”⁶, it is means and purpose at the same time. As a science of decision making power, politics resorts to the word in order to manifest power relationships, while the word, in turn, serves to the position consolidation within the power relationship. The word offers the politician the chance to present arguments in order to reinforce his/her position, to promote values specific to the political group to which s/he belongs, to influence the political referential according to his/her own interests and objectives.

A special issue related to the *politics-language* relationship is represented by the legitimacy of the political discourse due to the fact that, in the political world, to be able to speak one is supposed, first and foremost, to have the right to speak: “Political discourse, through its manifestation forms (doctrine, propaganda, ideology, publicity) *legitimizes* political knowledge and, consequently, political power”⁷. Consubstantial to power, legitimacy has a very powerful symbolic under-layer, which triggers a very diverse set of props. Political language is characterized by the legitimacy to

³ Michel Foucault, *Ordinea discursului*, Eurosong&Book, București, 1998, p. 12.

⁴ Gianni Vattimo, *Societatea transparentă*, Pontica, Constanța, 1995, p. 7.

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language et pouvoir symbolique*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 2001.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Ordinea discursului*, Eurosong&Book, București, 1998, p. 16.

⁷ Constantin Sălăvăstru, *Discursul puterii*, Tritonic, București, 2009, p. 15.

make decisions, to establish the significance of events in the political arena, to propose readings of public actions. The representative of power is not the only one who speaks, yet s/he is the only one speaking legitimately, the efficiency of a political discourse depending not solely on the degree of transparency and comprehensiveness of the message, but also on the status of the speaker. Language and politics complete each other, give each other substance, while the everlasting relationship within this couple generates movement throughout history: gaining power supposes gaining the right to speak, while losing power results in the lack of legitimacy of the discourse (totalitarian regimes in which the word belongs strictly to the leader, being inaccessible to all the others, offer such an example).

2. THE POLITICAL METAPHOR

From a pragmatic perspective, which cannot neglect contextual connections and the relationships with the users, political discourse is not limited to a simple communication act between the transmitter and the receiver, but it is necessarily animated by a persuasive intent. In these circumstances, when considering political communication, one is not merely interested in the “beauty” of the discourse or the logical sequence of ideas, but rather in the selection and valuation of the linguistic “tools”, in compliance with the persuasive effects aimed at.

Offering the ground for oblique expression and interferences, which take us beyond the letter of the discourse, the metaphor actually renders the histrionic dimension of the political discourse, which is tempted rather to dissimulate than to disclose. The political metaphor is not a simplistic stylistic ornament, but it functions as the first level of persuasion structuring. “By using metaphors, the transmitter has a double advantage: first of all s/he saves time (and even intellectual effort), and secondly, and most importantly, s/he allows for a double interpretation. Thus, a vaguely organized message will be most of the times decoded by the receiver depending on the latter’s needs, expectations and desires”.

Oblique communication, deviation of meaning, plasticity, accents of subjectivity and the like are among the specific traits imposed by the metaphor upon political discourse. Its main role is, however, to present events “as being of a certain type”, based on a resemblance relationship, thus generating the deviation of meaning: at a semantic level, the metaphor makes it possible to speak of politics in terms of a game, to speak about the war in terms of a theatre show, about social issues in terms of pathology, about abstract notions in concrete terms, and so on. As opposed to the artistic metaphor, the political metaphor is marked by certain judgments of value: it can either valorise or devaluate the described object, it can overestimate or degrade the image of a person, a group, an institution, a country, etc.

This paper aims at researching the mechanisms through which the metaphor is constructed and its effects upon the contemporary political discourse, by analysing speeches held in the plenary of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies in the period May-June 2015. Besides the way metaphors function within political communication, we are equally interested in the pragmatic possibilities it acquires in the economy of the discursive manifestation in the political area.

2.1. Mechanisms of metaphor production

Linguistic studies of the last few decades have emphasized the fact that the metaphor does not belong exclusively to the literary field, but it is a figure of the language perceived from a more general perspective. The limitations of linguistic theories that reduced the metaphor to a mere ornament, deviation or anomaly, have imposed new approaches regarding this phenomenon, by exploring the conceptual apparatus and methodologies specific to other disciplines (sociology, cognitive psychology, philosophy, and so on). The cognitive approach consists in the reconsideration of metaphors as results of certain cognitive processes that occur at the conceptual level⁸. The cognitivists are not as much interested in the classical question *What is a metaphor?*, but

⁸ Vrămuleț Marinela, *Metafora războiului în limbajul politic*, Editura Universitară, București, 2012, p. 10.

they rather ask questions such as *How does the metaphor function? What are the mechanisms of metaphor construction and interpretation?* From such a perspective, the approach cannot disregard the analysis of the pragmatic and semantic values metaphorical expressions acquire within the discourse. The metaphor cannot be analysed in isolation from the discursive context where it occurs, since this offers the key for its interpretation.

According to G. Lakoff and M. Johnson⁹, deciphering the metaphor should start from the following theses:

- a. the metaphor is not only langue, but an issue of conceptual thinking;
- b. the conceptual metaphor implies the partial overlapping of a conceptual structure (the source concept) over another conceptual structure (the target concept);
- c. metaphorical overlapping is strictly unidirectional, starting from the source field towards the target field;
- d. in a conventional conceptual metaphor the target concept is partially structured and formed by the source concept;
- e. conventional metaphors are not sentences.

Thus, in the sentence “Black Tuesday has never been over, Ponta, Șova and their associates lead the *thieves’ revolution* (s.n.)! The thieves’ revolution can be seen every day (...)”¹⁰, the source concept *the thieves’ revolution* transfers on the target concept *the Ponta Government* a series of pejorative connotations, underlying the shortcomings of the government led by prime minister Victor Ponta and the legal issues the minister’s entourage is confronted with.

Our conceptual system is structured metaphorically, and the language metaphors are a linguistic reflexion of these metaphoric conceptual structures¹¹. Lakoff and Johnson distinguish between the conceptual metaphor and the metaphorical expression, delimiting between two analysis perspectives: the first one aims at the re-interpretation of a conceptual field in terms specific to a different field (we speak of politics in terms specific to the area of theatre or sports), while the second takes into account the linguistic and discursive materialization of the metaphorical reorganization of a field (the association between politics and a theatre show would turn politicians into actors, political life into a stage and party leaders into directors writing the scripts according to which political acts are performed).

Both integrated pragmatics and cognitive pragmatics – two main directions of contemporary pragmatics – reject the distinction between the literal meaning (of words and phrases) and the non-literal meaning (of the speaker’s utterance). In the specific case of metaphorical phrases, the speaker assumes that the listeners will not consider his/her phrases literally and that, although they contain a variable dose of ambiguity, they are the expression of a very precise thought. The interpretation mechanisms of the metaphorical constructions start from the awareness of the fact that between the declarative form of the metaphorical phrase and the speaker’s thought there exists a relationship of resemblance, rather than one of identification. Consequently, if a politician resorts to metaphorical constructions, s/he does so not in order to render his enunciation hermetic for a part of the audience, but, on the contrary, because s/he aims at maximal effects at the level of reception. Thus, the title of the speech given by deputy Costel Alexe, in the Session of the Chamber of Deputies from May, 5, 2015, “MAE (The Ministry for External Affairs) has become the 5th pillar of PSD (Social Democratic Party). The Aurescu reform looks like this: temple for Năstase, rotation of PSD members, ministry prepared for parliament elections in 2016”¹² manages to draw the audience’s attention through a series of metaphorical expressions that summarize the activity of the government led by Ponta. The politician aims at providing the information in a fast and synthetic manner, and the metaphor of the *temple* manages to cast a negative light on the government, preoccupied rather in idolatrizing its party members than in the real issues of the country.

⁹ *Apud* Camelia Mihaela Cmeciu, *Strategii persuasive în discursul politic*, Universitas XXI, Iași, 2005, p. 37.

¹⁰ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7526&idm=1,002&idl=1>, retrieved on 6.07.2015.

¹¹ Lakoff G. & Johnson M., *Les metaphores dans la vie quotidienne*, Paris, Les Editions Minuit, 1980.

¹² <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7502&idl=1>, retrieved on 06.07.2015.

Political metaphor is deprived of the virtues of the poetical metaphor, becoming vulgar, in the etymological sense of the word, and laborious; its importance is not rendered by its degree of novelty, but by the place it holds in the economy of the discursive manifestation. The politicians' preference for metaphorical expressions is obvious from the very titles of their speeches in the Chamber of Deputies: *A bridge of hearts cannot be broken! Black and white in the health system, The red phone between NATO and Russia, Death that brings life, The Godson's prosecutors wash the Godfather's face, The little girl that only says "No", Ponta Government's Festival of Demagogy, Stop the posting hysteria, Fake promises of PNL, voting by mail and having the wool pulled over the citizens' eyes, Disconnecting from the past, Ponta gathers fiscal bills... from the Arab countries! The PSD Government puts the waiters through their paces*, and so forth.

"The metaphorical phrase is an ostensive communication act able to draw the addressee's attention towards the communicated content (*vouloir dire*), that will be recovered by means of deductive inferences. The necessity to provide an analysis of the metaphorical phrase seen as an ostensive-referential communication act is justified, from a pertinent theory perspective, by the fact that it cannot be conceived outside the communicative process, the latter beginning in the moment the collocutor not only speaks, but *says* something to someone"¹³. By domesticating the abstract notions in the political field, the metaphorical expressions receive pragmatic connotations. The greater the distance between the fields where the metaphor operates transactions, the more laborious the inferential mechanisms, and the more intense the pragmatic effects.

2.2. Fields generating metaphorical constructions

The contemporary political discourse makes full use of the ability of the metaphor to connect extremely diverse fields, to bring them together or even make them fuse. The metaphor brings the addressee into a familiar semantic field, fulfilling thus two of the objectives specific to the performance of the discursive act: attracting the interest and facilitating the reception of the message, by appealing to common knowledge elements. The ability to make connexions depends on the politician's knowledge, imagination, talent and intent. S/he has the liberty to resort to a pre-established repertoire or to generate new metaphorical expressions. Among the most common fields generating metaphorical constructions in the contemporary political discourse, one may refer to:

a. The war field – perceived as the ground of confrontation between political adversaries, politics is often described in terms of war, in order to emphasize the tensions and divergences between political groups:

"Băscescu was a specialist in recruiting mediocre individuals in order to impose them in the top of the system, turning them into the most loyal soldiers"; "a new formula of the Forestry Code, voted after long and hard battles in Parliament"; "magnificent events organized in order to throw firecrackers that would conceal the incompetence and corruption of the government"; "Had the minister of health not preferred to flee to the Arab countries, he would have stayed in the country, on the barricades"¹⁴.

b. The show field – the association with the theatrical or cinema world aims at emphasizing the mystifying nature of the political world. The phrase *political stage*, used both in the media and the political discourse, underlines the fake nature of the political life and its actors – the politicians, the illusion-like character of political actions and the artificiality of the world:

"both commercial actors and people on the political stage must understand that this kind of attitude will be condemned by the audience"; "Gentlemen, I invite you to run, without delay, the final episode of this extremely bad taste soap-opera", "Many would ask why I grant Victor Ponta the 'Golden Raspberry Award'. Well, how is Victor Ponta different from the worst Hollywood actors?"¹⁵.

¹³ Vărmuleț Marinela, *Metafora războiului în limbajul politic*, Editura Universitară, București, 2012, p. 25.

¹⁴ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7508&idl=1>, retrieved on 13.07.2015.

¹⁵ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7508&idl=1>, retrieved on 13.07.2015.

c. *The arts field* – the association with music, dance, painting and the like – essentially leisure activities, is in accordance with the intention to devalue the adversaries' political activities:

“both prime-minister Ponta and the ex-minister Șova must be held politically responsible, as they are the ones drawing coloured highway maps for the barons”; „Adrian Năstase's cynical eloquence, reminding of a soprano during an interview”¹⁶.

d. *The animal field* – the metaphorical transfer by means of which animal species (inferior or prey) are used in order to describe the human species¹⁷ is constantly used in the contemporary political discourse. “The transfer implies the transition of the words in the deprecating axiological category: the devaluation or negative valuation represent a mandatory component of this process”¹⁸. The frequent resort to a vocabulary register designated the animal species in referring to the political universe turn certain metaphors into clichés (sharks, wolves, jackals, bunnies, bears, wild boars, etc.). The metaphor of the *dinosaur* refers to outdated or historically and morally compromised social, economic and political realities: industrial, political, university, media dinosaur. The animal metaphor generally has negative connotations, aiming at discrediting the political adversary.

“The rabbit-type candidate to presidential elections, that had negotiated a judge position at the Constitutional Court”; “Imitating prime-minister Ponta, who looks for scapegoats to justify his incompetence”; “the 6 o'clock cuckoo has ceased to delight our ears with his speeches”¹⁹; “The PSD bosses have chosen to parasite the governing”; “prime-minister Ponta has thrown a bone to the Romanians, to show them that he is able to organize the forest”²⁰.

e. *The game field* – the metaphorical concept of *game* occurs frequently in either the political discourse or commentary, as a synonym for the strategy or rules governing the political arena. The game field is usually the source of metaphorical expressions carrying pejorative connotations:

„The double game, the ridiculous metamorphosis, dribbling common sense and morals, practicing double-meaning language are more dangerous and illegitimate than any political minister”; „Bogdan Aurescu, the one who, in order to play well in front of professor Ponta, is playing all possible cards, accepts all compromises one can possibly imagine”; „The reduction of VAT for food products – an image game for PSD”; “VAT reduction has become some sort of table tennis played by the ones who are supposed to apply the measure – authorities and sellers”; “during his player contract, the ex-president”²¹; “Romania is an important regional player within the European security policies”²².

f. *The physiological field/ corporality* – the association of political life with a poor state of health aims at discrediting and devaluating politicians in governing positions. The illness metaphor refers to the failure of a political group:

“Debauched populism is the cancer eating our political class”; “Romania without doctors – a sick Romania”; “The two illnesses of the Romanian society”²³; „It is well-known that the USL government promised, if not a cure, at least a treatment for the wounds inflicted on the body of our country by a government that was, in many respects, irresponsible”; “The Romanian pre-university education system in great suffering”²⁴.

The examples above indicate that, in political communication, the metaphorical expressions exploit the most diverse semantic fields, having the role to formulate, through the source field, the

¹⁶ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7502&idl=1>, retrieved on 16.07.2015.

¹⁷ V. Gabriela Duda, *Limbaajul politicianilor: între violență și deriziune*, in Domnița Tomescu (coord), *Limbaajul politic românesc actual*, Editura Universității Petrol-Gaze din Ploiești, Ploiești, 2009, pp. 17-42.

¹⁸ V. Gabriela Duda, *Limbaajul politicianilor: între violență și deriziune*, in Domnița Tomescu (coord), *Limbaajul politic românesc actual*, Editura Universității Petrol-Gaze din Ploiești, Ploiești, 2009, p. 20.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7508&idl=1>, retrieved on 14.07.2015.

²¹ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7502&idl=1>, retrieved on 8.07.2015.

²² <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7513&idl=1>, retrieved on 15.07.2015.

²³ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7508&idl=1>, retrieved on 13.07.2015.

²⁴ <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=7513&idl=1>, retrieved on 15.07.2015.

traits specific to the target field. Behaviours, practices, and attitudes are not represented in isolation, but by means of certain semiotic relationships that connect experiences depending on the elements they have in common. Between the metaphor and the socio-cultural context there exists a relation of interdependence so that metaphorical expressions are based on an already built content, a network of interpreters that decide, on semiotic grounds, upon resemblances and differences²⁵. Without being limited to a simple pun upon words, the metaphor involves a translation of the relationships with the world, with the other, which actually explains the preference, in a certain historical context or epoch, for certain metaphorical structures. This is governed by a conceptual system which is in turn structured and governed by each individual's cultural horizon, and the metaphorical expressions interpretation cannot render less visible the experiences, concepts, values and attitudes which inspire and generate them at the same time.

2.3. The vulgarization of metaphor in the political discourse

Our cultural and physical experience offers the ground for the creation of more and more conceptual metaphors that, while circulating, become vulgar, diminish their degree of expressiveness, become discursive clichés with particular pragmatic values. The massive presence of the metaphor in the contemporary political discourse can be explained by its mainly persuasive values and the ability to translate abstract political notions by resorting to fields of knowledge that would be familiar to the collocutor. "In the political discourse the metaphor is given an argumentative part, participating in the formation of ideas. By means of the metaphor, thought moves, as stated by Aristotle, from genus to species, from species to genus, from genus to genus, and this movement of thought, this involvement of reason confers argumentative value to the metaphor"²⁶. The politician resorts to metaphorical expressions not necessarily due to the need to enhance the expressivity, but due to the desire to create a sense of cordiality that would facilitate the transmission of his/her political message. Attracting the collocutor on a familiar ground aims at creating a certain sense of complicity, the desire to start a dialogue, over the heads of the political adversaries and beyond their actions.

When they occur from the very title of the speech, metaphorical expressions play the *captatio benevolentiae* part, creating the background for tense reception. However, beyond the expressiveness they imprint on a politician's discourse, political metaphors have a predominantly argumentative role: phenomena with a high degree of abstractness and complexity (power, sovereignty, community and the like) are presented in terms of familiar realities, more easily digested by the receiver. For this reason, we note that the corporal and sensorial experiences are intensely exploited in the contemporary political discourse.

Establishing connections between extremely diverse fields / realities, the metaphor generates new perspectives upon the described events / facts. The use of the metaphor is no longer dictated by expressive reasons, but by the politician's pragmatic intentions. It supports the argumentative steps of the speaker, fulfilling inherent pragmatic values. From this perspective, Gianluca Briguglia speaks about a genuine metaphorical tradition in the case of political communication, distinguishing between metaphorical topics at the political language level²⁷. Such an example is provided by the *human body* metaphor which suggests, on the one hand the superiority of the whole as contrasted to the parts and on the other hand, the need to differentiate between functions and hierarchies of the political body components. The interpretation key for the *body* metaphor is suggested by the context (be it physiological, medical or philosophical) in which it circulates, as well as by the politician's discursive intentions.

Our research has emphasized, as well, the fact that the use of metaphorical expressions usually triggers pejorative connotations upon the target field, for which reason the politicians' bias towards metaphorical expression is obvious when they describe their political opponents' actions, as

²⁵ Umberto Eco, *Sémiotique et philosophie du langage*, PUF, Paris, 1988.

²⁶ Adina Dumitru, *Limbajul politic actual. Dimensiuni lingvistice și pragmatice*, Editura Tiparg, Pitești, 2010, p. 140.

²⁷ Gianluca Briguglia, *Metafora e linguaggi politici*, in „Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale”, no. 3/ 2004.

opposed to their own or their political group's actions. Metaphorical expression induces a negative perspective upon the adversaries' political actions, aiming at the denigration of the opponent political group.

3. CONCLUSIONS

A particular form of interference, with indirectly transmitted effects and communicative values, the political metaphor translates, after all the speaker's intent to elude, respectively to mystify political realities. The contemporary political discourse mainly exploits the persuasive virtues of the metaphor, its ability to make the transition from the simple to the complex register, from the abstract to the concrete, conferring the discourse an intense subjective nature. We emphasize, as well, the explicitly polemic under-layer of the metaphorical constructions in the contemporary political discourse, besides their role in the discrediting of political adversaries. Defining the metaphorical mechanism in terms of interaction, "transaction between contexts" actually lays stress on the semantic potential of the metaphorical expressions and last but not least, the impact they have at the reception level. The metaphor "projects" upon the main character traits belonging to the secondary character, functioning as a filter that suppresses certain traits, while emphasizing others, depending on the politician's discursive aims. Oriented towards inducing and promoting particular political values and towards discrediting political adversaries, the politician makes use of metaphors in order to win the audience's adhesion and cast a bad image upon political opponents.

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